

**STATEMENT OF
JANET KELLY, DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
STATE OF MONTANA**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
U.S. SENATE**

**Testimony in Support of the IP-Enabled Voice Communications and Public
Safety Act of 2005 (S.1063)**

September 1, 2005

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Senator Burns, thank you very much for providing me with this opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Janet Kelly, and I am the Director of the Department of Administration for the State of Montana. I am appearing today on behalf of the State of Montana because the Department of Administration has responsibility for managing Montana's Statewide 9-1-1 Program.

The State of Montana offers its support for the IP-Enabled Voice Communications and Public Safety Act of 2005 (S.1063). This bill addresses a number of concerns I will identify and supports our efforts in providing the highest quality public safety services to the citizens of Montana.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senator Nelson for sponsoring this bill and to Senators Clinton, Kerry, Snowe and Burns, its co-sponsors. Senator Burns has been a leader on this issue, not only here in Montana but throughout the nation. For example, in 1999 he sponsored the

Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act, an important roadmap for deploying wireless 9-1-1.

9-1-1 services, let alone public safety technology, are not a “plug and play” operation. There have been exciting advances in communications technology that provide our citizens with greater choice and capabilities. But we must ensure that the deployment of these new technologies doesn’t interfere with the ability to provide important public safety services. Furthermore, the technology landscape is ever-changing. We must maintain vigilance so that critical public safety services continue to be provided as technology evolves. The legislation that Senator Burns and others have sponsored will be a valuable tool in ensuring that public safety services will be available to all citizens, regardless of their choice of technology.

Undoubtedly, technological advances will create new issues and challenges as businesses offer new services to citizens. Legislation, regulations and standards may be needed to ensure the citizen is adequately served. The public safety community, in particular, needs to have a place and a voice at that table.

The challenge of keeping pace with technology, let alone responding to the challenges that have been dropped on the doorstep of our 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), is a daunting task. In addition, we have limitations in our respective jurisdictions as to our authority and ability to enforce the rules. With limited funds and a small population spread across a vast state, we knew we had to work together. So in Montana we collaborated with local, state and federal partners.

In 2002, the Governor's office created the Public Safety Services Bureau in the Department of Administration. The Public Safety Services Bureau manages the State's 9-1-1 Program and statewide planning of public safety radio communications.

Montana is among the handful of states that have attained statewide basic 9-1-1 service, but the public, even in remote areas, expects enhanced 9-1-1 service. When faced with the challenge of deploying E9-1-1 solutions across the State, the 9-1-1 Program office collaborated with the Montana Sheriff's and Peace Officers' Association, and, with the assistance of a FY03 federal appropriation, a statewide E9-1-1 network project is underway. Montana's 9-1-1 program is successful because of the cooperation among legislators, regulators, state and local government administrators and the telephone industry. Our future success will require continued cooperation to solve the problems caused by new technology and conditions that will impact the public safety community

Now we turn our attention to VoIP. Like most technologies, it creates new opportunities but also new challenges. I applaud the bill sponsors for tackling these new challenges. I will address these challenges from the State of Montana's perspective.

First, we need to safeguard the ability for Montanans to pay for the delivery of public safety services across Montana's vast territory. We are concerned with the potential for unfunded mandates that would impact our ability to update and maintain our infrastructure.

We want to be sure that we will be able to continue to work to enhance existing technology rather than having to deal with planned obsolescence or incompatible technologies.

We want to be sure that our citizens continue to have access to public safety services. As technology evolves, it must not interfere with the public's access to critical public safety services.

This hearing today reinforces the importance of the industry, Congress and the public safety community working together, and I applaud the Committee's commitment, efforts and continued support of public safety in this country.

The State of Montana is working on solutions and embracing the new technology for public safety; and we stand ready to assist you in any way we can to make our nation safer.

Thank you.